

Exodus 20:4-7 - Thursday, January 22nd, 2009

- Last week we began our study of the Ten Commandments here in chapter 20, and tonight will continue on beginning in verse 4.
 - We only got to and through the first commandment because it was necessary to understand God's purpose in giving the law.
 - If you weren't here last Thursday, I really want to encourage you to get a copy of that study to better know the "why" behind the "what."
- The first commandment, found in verse three, was; "You shall have no other gods before Me." Verse four has the 2nd commandment.

- 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image -- any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5a you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.
- The first commandment forbids the worship of false gods, and now this second commandment forbids the false worship of the true God.
 - God forbids the use of images or icons as objects of worship. He doesn't forbid images and icons, just the idolatry by worshipping them.
 - It's as if God is saying; "don't make an idol of your god in any image, because I created you and am conforming you into My image."
- In other words, I cannot make God into my image because I am made in His image. I cannot depict Him. To do so is to replace Him.
- If God is in my image, I make my image my God and begin to worship the image as God. That's why God forbids us from doing this.
 - Once again we have woven into the fabric of this tender commandment, the "why" behind the "what" I should and should not do.

WHAT I SHOULD NOT DO	WHY I SHOULD NOT DO IT
I should not make God into my own image.	Romans 1:22-23, Paul describes what happens when we try.
I should not make images other than for artistic purposes.	Exodus 25:18, 26:31, God commands Israel to make images of Cherubim's (not Him).
I should not make images as the focus or help to worship God.	John 4:24, God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
I should not think that any image replaces or enhances the image of the invisible God other than Jesus Christ.	Colossians 1:13-16, Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, in whom we have forgiveness of sins.

- Someone better tell the Roman Catholic Church about this commandment! Don't they do this, and don't they know about this?

"To countenance its image worship, the Roman Catholic Church has left the whole of this second commandment out of the decalogue, and thus lost one whole commandment out of the ten; but to keep up the number they have divided the tenth into two."
Adam Clarke

- 5b For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- Again, God is not jealous of us, He is jealous for us. It's what He says next that has been the source of a dangerous false teaching.
 - It's the teaching that there are "generational curses." We find this again three more times in the first five books of Moses.

Exodus 34:6-7 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. KJV

Numbers 14:18-19 18 'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." NKJV

Deuteronomy 5:8-10 (second/Deuce-Law) 8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image -- any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. NKJV

Reasons why there are no "generational curses"

1. The Lord visits the iniquity for the purpose of showing mercy, forgiveness, and compassion. He is longsuffering, and slow to anger.
2. The Lord is so compassionate that He visits the children to the fourth generation because of the effects their father's sins had on them.
3. He visits the iniquity of generations of children whose fathers hated God, showing mercy to thousands of those who love God.
4. One cannot be held responsible for, or make payment for the sins of another. As one said; "every tub has to stand on its own feet".
5. There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Even if there was a generational curse, the cross broke it.
6. Probably one of the most compelling reasons that there are no "generational curses" is that we see no example of it in Scripture.
 - Jesus or Paul never mention generational curses
 - The book of Acts never shows generational curses dealt with.
 - The Old Testament has good Kings coming from bad, and bad from good.
 - The Old Testament prophets never refer to, or prophesy about it.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

- This commandment is misunderstood as simply forbidding the cursing with and using of, the Lord's name by, swearing with His name.
- Though this does forbid cussing by taking the Lord's name in vain, it's not limited to only that, which reminds of a story.

"A preacher was making his rounds on a bicycle, when he came upon a little boy trying to sell a lawn mower. 'How much do you want for the mower?' asked the preacher. 'I just want enough money to go out and buy me a bicycle,' said the little boy. After a moment of consideration, the preacher asked, 'Will you take my bike in trade for it?' The little boy asked if he could try it out first, and, after riding the bike around a little while, said, 'Mister, you've got yourself a deal.' The preacher took the mower and began to crank it. He pulled on the rope a few times with no response from the mower. The preacher called the little boy over and said, 'I can't get this mower to start.' The little boy said, 'That's because you have to cuss at it to get it started.' The preacher said, 'I can't cuss. It's been so long since I became a Christian that I don't even remember how to cuss.' The little boy looked at him happily and said, 'You just keep pulling on that rope. It'll come back to ya.'"

- Actually, commandment number three can be, and is broken in potentially three ways. Consider the following:

1. Profanely (using the name of God in blasphemy and cursing)
2. Jokingly (using the name of God in a silly, and even stupid way)
3. Hypocritically (claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces Him)

- Knowing this helps us understand that when you realize the seriousness of trivializing Who God is souls can be lost for eternity.
- Again, this commandment has woven into its fabric God's love and compassion towards us and how He wants to protect and direct us.
- Hypocrisy particularly has the propensity to keep people, and even drive people away, from the Lord when we use His name in vain.